

THE
L I F E
OF
THOMAS BOULTER,
THE NOTED FLYING
H I G H W A Y M A N ;

Who has for some Time past committed numerous
Highway Robberies in all parts of this Kingdom;

Convicted at the CASTLE of WINCHESTER,

On FRIDAY the 31st of JULY, 1778,

BEFORE THE

HON. SIR FRANCIS BULLER, KNT.

Of robbing WILLIAM EMBERY on the King's Highway, near Horn-
Dean, Hants,

And of stopping and robbing the Passengers in the Bath Diligence,
between ROMSEY and SOUTHAMPTON, in the same County.

TOGETHER WITH

A short Narrative of the LIFE of JAMES
CALDWELL, his Accomplice.

WINTON, PRINTED BY J. WILKES.

SOLD by S. CROWDER, and G. ROBINSON, in PATER-
NOSTER-RROW, LONDON; and COLLINS and Co. SARUM.

MDCCLXXVIII.

[Price ONE SHILLING.]

John Phillips's

J. I. F. E.
THOMAS BOUTER

JAN 21 1927

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following sheets having been put into the hands of the Publisher, by the Keeper of *Winchester Goal*, and ordered to be printed at the request of the Convicts; the public may rely on the authenticity of the facts therein related. But as spurious copies will most likely be printed in different parts of the kingdom, the public are requested to observe, that none are genuine, unless signed in the hand writing of

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J. Wilkes', is centered on the page. The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid.

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THE LIFE OF
L I F E
OF
THOMAS BOULTER.

BEFORE we enter upon the immediate subject of this narrative, it may not be unacceptable to the reader to be informed of some particulars relative to the character and situation of this unhappy man's friends. His father, Thomas Boulter, was bred a miller, and lived a considerable time at a little village called Poltshot, near Devizes, in the county of Wilts, where he rented a little Grist-mill, and supported his family in a decent manner. But his disposition seems to have been naturally bad, and given to every species of dishonesty, which he frequently displayed in numberless acts of petty theft and robbery. By the vigilance of an old

woman, his neighbour, who had long conceived a suspicion of him, he was at last openly detected in stealing her honey, for which he was committed to Devizes Bridewell, afterwards tried, found guilty, and publicly whipped.

It was not long after this transaction, before he set out on a journey to Trowbridge, to transact some little business he had that way. On his return, he stole a horse, the property of Mr. Hall, at Trowbridge, and rode it with the utmost speed to Andover in Hants, and sold it for six pounds, though worth, at the lowest estimation, upwards of fifteen pounds. This circumstance giving suspicion to several persons present, he was taken up, and committed to Winchester Gaol. At the following assizes he was convicted of this crime on the clearest evidence, and received sentence of death; but through the intercession of several of his friends his punishment was mitigated, and he was transported in 1775, for fourteen years.

His uncle was a labouring man at Lavington, near Devizes, and suspected of frequently committing private thefts, and highway robberies. At length, attempting to rob a gentleman a little way out of the town of Market Lavington, the

THOMAS BOULTER. 7

the gentleman shot at him, and lodged a brace of slugs in his thigh, and left him bleeding in the highway. Some persons coming by, humanely took him up, carried him to Market Lavington, and obliged the parish to take care of him, and to procure the assistance of a surgeon. His wound was cured, but he lost the use of his thigh, which was never afterwards restored, so that remaining a cripple ever after, the person assaulted never thought it worth while to prosecute him; and being unable to work, or support himself by hard labour, he was removed to his own parish at Lavington, where he remains in the Work-house at this day. He was supposed by many people to have been concerned with Boulter in robbing on the highway, particularly in Wiltshire, &c. but Boulter declared in the most serious manner the morning of his execution, that his uncle at Lavington never had been concerned with him in any one robbery whatsoever.

If principle or disposition is at all hereditary, no one can wonder that young Boulter should follow the example of his predecessors, should have had a natural inclination to dishonesty, to pilfering his neighbours, or to rob on the highway; his propensity to which has often carried

him to commit the act, not through want, or necessity, but from the pleasure of gratifying an inclination, which, there is no doubt, though at the risk of his life, afforded him a satisfaction that he could find in no other way of life. This is evident from the daring robberies he committed at such times as he had plenty of money, and a great deal of property of another kind, upon which he might have found a comfortable subsistence for a long time; but instead of this, he would deposit all his ill-gotten wealth in other people's hands, and never ask for it again; but, in the hour of want, would prefer going on the highway, than seek assistance from those who had perhaps some hundred pounds of his stolen effects in their hands. That this was often the case, the reader will be convinced on the perusal of the following narration, which is copied as close as possible from Boulter's own words.

Thomas Boulter, jun. was born at Poltshot, near Devizes, in the County of Wilts. His father gave him a tolerable education, such as sufficiently qualified him for a tradesman. He was brought up under his father to the business of a miller, and for a long time managed and conducted the little business his father carried on
in

in that way at Poltshot. In the year 1774, his sister opened a little milliner's shop at Newport in the Isle of Wight; and Boulter, not very well satisfied with the employment under his father, procured a little sum of money, and went to live with his sister in the Island. He opened a shop a little before his father was taken up for horse-stealing, and carried on the grocery business at Newport, and his sister at the same time continued in the millinary way in the same house with him.

During his residence at Newport, his character seems pretty fair, until about the middle of 1775, when he first took to rob on the highway. Finding business not to answer his expectation, and being very much pushed for money, he set off with a determination of picking up a considerable booty before he returned. Previous to this, he had taken an opportunity of going to Portsmouth, where he supposed no suspicion would arise on his procuring pistols. He purchased two brace, together with casting irons for slugs, powder-horn, powder, &c. He then returned to the Island, and remained a little while longer with his sister. He had some thoughts of first trying his luck in the Island; but on considering how confined a spot it was, and how impossible to succeed without an immediate discovery,

covery, he thought it most adviseable to lay aside all thoughts of that kind for the present, and to try his fortune in a more extensive country, from whence he could at any time retire for refuge into the Island.

About the middle of the year 1775 he set out from Newport in the *Pacquet*, under pretence of going to see his mother at *Poltshor*. When he arrived at Southampton, he went to Mr. Cox at the Vine Inn, and hired a horse to go to Salisbury, desiring at the same time to have a good one. He took the Salisbury road a little beyond Millbrook, when he turned off over Southampton Common, and crossed the country, till he got into the great western turnpike road, between Stockbridge and Sutton. In less than a quarter of an hour he met the Salisbury diligence, in which was two passengers. He rode on about three hundred yards, then turned back, and rode past the diligence some distance, feeling a kind of irresolution and tremor before he could attack it; however, he turned short round, pulled out his pistol, rode up to the diligence with a forced courage, ordered the driver to stop, and in less than two minutes robbed the passengers of their watches and money; said he was much obliged

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to them, for that he was in great want, and wished them a pleasant journey.

This was the first robbery he ever committed; and finding the business so easy, and so profitable, he made no hesitation in pursuing his journey to Salisbury, robbing every one he met, where any probability of success, or of acquiring any booty, appeared in his favour. From Salisbury, he took the road for Devizes, and on the Plain robbed three single gentlemen he met with on horseback, and two persons on foot; and before he reached Poltshot had collected near forty pounds, and seven watches, which, in his first essay, and in so short a time, was great encouragement to pursue the same steps in his way back again. For this purpose he took the Devizes turnpike road for Andover, upon which he robbed a post chaise, several farmers on horseback, one person on foot, and two countrywomen returning from market. He went into Andover in sight of the last person he had robbed, put up his horse, and baited at the Swan, where he staid near an hour, and then took the road for Winchester; met, and robbed a gentleman's servant near Whorwell, and a post-chaise on the Basingstoke turnpike road, into which he crossed over the Downs; then went straight to Southampton,

ampton, and returned into the Isle of Wight by the first packet, very well satisfied with the success of his expedition.

The monies he had collected during his absence, enabled him to remain some time at Newport undisturbed by his creditors, and served to supply all his present purposes; the idea, however, of a new and more extensive tour was seldom out of his mind. He took the first opportunity of providing a new brace of pistols, of the best make, had a new suit of cloaths, with secret pockets contrived to receive them, new boots, and in short every article necessary to equip a gentleman of the road. But the most essential article was yet wanting, a good swift horse; and here again he was staggered by his inability to its purchase. But as he seldom met with any difficulty but what his invention could remove, so in the present case, his ingenuity speedily relieved him; he was determined to steal the first fine horse he could meet with in a situation to be taken away. The island, he was convinced, would, by no means favour his scheme, from the impossibility of conveying the horse across the water without its being known; it therefore remained that he should take the packet, and
search

search round the neighbourhood of Southampton, or the Forest, where he doubted not of being very soon accommodated to his mind. When he arrived at Southampton, he at first intended searching the Common on foot, supposing he might suit himself instantly; but he reflected that if he should not succeed, he might be obliged to go further, and might, if on horse-back, transact some other business by the way, particularly as cash was low, and the expences of his journey likely to be considerable. These considerations carried him to Mr. Cox, at the Vine Inn, where he has frequently furnished himself for these expeditions; and his Landlord, at the same time, little suspecting what business he was going upon, never hesitated at lending him a horse.

His first search was made upon the Common, and the neighbouring inclosures, but without any success, as he could find nothing but ponies, broken down hacks, and such as were very unfit for his purpose. He then took the road for Lindhurst, and in his way came up with an old gentleman going to Lymington, with whom he fell into discourse on different subjects till they had gone about four miles together, when Mr. Boulter very politely told him

him that he was a young tradesman very much in distress, had sustained several severe losses, which compelled him to borrow a trifle on the highway to help him on, and that he must desire his mite amongst the rest. The civility of the attack operated much on the gentleman's good will, who pulled out a small morocco pocket-book, and gave him a 10l. bank bill, saying it was all he had, except a few shillings in his purse, which would be of no use to him; hoped his story was true, and that when his present distress was removed, he would not have recourse to such measures in future, and he should not think the money lost or ill-bestowed. Boulter returned him thanks in a very civil manner, excused himself from pursuing that road any further, and wishing him a good day, returned towards Totton, in search of what he most wanted, a good horse.

When he came into the neighbourhood of Totton, he rode over a variety of enclosures, but could find nothing to his satisfaction. He searched round all the neighbouring villages, with the same bad success, till wearied out, he returned to an inn at Redbridge, where he remained that night. Early in the morning he set off towards Romsey, and in his way robbed two persons on horseback of a silver watch, five guineas,

guineas, and some silver. After staying an hour at the Bell at Romsey, he took the Ringwood road, and cut across the forest for Fording-bridge. Took some refreshment at the Greyhound, and towards the evening set off for Ringwood, through several villages, where he supposed the greatest probability of completing his business. In his way, he observed several horses in different enclosures, fit for his purpose, but the evening was not far enough advanced to carry his plan into execution; so that in the mean time he went on to Ringwood, where he staid till near nine o'clock at night. He then returned very slowly the same road he came, and having pitched upon the one he thought most fit for his use, he opened a gate and rode towards the horse, which, after some little difficulty he caught, and led in hand the same night to Southampton Common, where he turned him loose, then went to Southampton, and took the first packet for the Isle of Wight.

Having now made every preparation for his business, he left the Island, with a full determination of not seeing it again till he had amassed a considerable sum, which he proposed to pick up on a tour into the West of England. A saddle being provided, he set out, and after travers-

ing the Common for about an hour, caught his horse, with which he proceeded to the Horns, an inn upon the road, where he baited, and took some refreshment; he then pursued his journey towards the west, meeting with no adventure the first day; but reached White Parish in Wilts in the evening, where he slept that night. About nine the next morning, he started for Salisbury, intending to get into the neighbourhood of Exeter before he proceeded to business. However, upon the road between Salisbury and Blandford, he robbed a diligence, and a gentleman on horseback, from whom he took a gold watch, two guineas, and some silver. He then pushed on to Blandford as speedily as possible, where he staid till about four o'clock; then mounted his horse taking the road for Dorchester, upon which he committed several robberies till near nine o'clock at night, when he broke away across the country to Cerne, in order to avoid pursuit. Here he staid above half the next day in order to refresh his horse, and then proceeded towards Bridport. Having regained the turnpike road, he presently came up with a gentleman, whom he accosted in a very civil manner, and said, if he was going for Bridport or Exeter, he should be happy with his company. The gentleman said he was going below
Bridport,

Bridport, and should be glad to accompany him so far as he went. After some conversation, it came out that the gentleman was a grazier, and had been to Salisbury market, where he pretended to have sold a large quantity of cattle, at a very advanced price; that he was remarkable for always bringing the finest cattle to market, and could always get a better price than his neighbours; Boulter replied, that he wished he had been always so lucky in his way of business, but unhappily for him, he had sustained innumerable losses, and had met with misfortunes of several kinds, that had reduced him to distress; that he had not been accustomed to know want, and therefore had taken to the road for present relief, and was glad he had so luckily fallen into company with a gentleman who appeared so well able to assist him; and pulling out a pistol, begged he might ease him of some of the money he had received at market. The gentleman was so much surprized that he could not for some time utter a word; but at last replied, that he supposed he did it to frighten him, and could not surely be in earnest; upon which Boulter clapped the pistol close to his breast, and insisted he should not go a step farther till he had delivered his money, when he took from him in bank bills and cash near 90l. His watch, which he seemed

to set a value upon for its antiquity, and some bills of exchange, he returned him again, saying, what he had taken was sufficient for his present purpose, and therefore wished him a good day, saying, he should now return to London. After this he committed a number of robberies near Dorchester, Weymouth, Blandford, Honiton, Exeter, &c. till he had got together in money and other valuable articles to the amount of near 500*l*. with which he retired, and spent several months with his mother and among his relations, without committing any other robbery, in the course of which time he spent his money very profusely, and led a very gay life.

In May 1776, finding his pocket decline, he set off upon another expedition, having equipped himself in all respects for the purpose, and mounted himself upon a good horse. He took the road for London, intending to try his fortune in the neighbourhood of that great metropolis, where he supposed he might soon furnish himself with whatever sum he wanted, and with less danger of being known. He set out from the neighbourhood of Devizes, and got to Staines the second evening, where he lay that night, intending to attack some of the coaches coming out of London early the next morning. Accordingly
about

about four o'clock he mounted his horse, and was not long before he met several of the Western coaches, but the sight of a blunderbuss upon the roof of most of them, made him think it imprudent to venture at an attack, which in all probability, would have ended his life. He therefore contented himself with robbing two diligences, in one of which was a single lady, and in the other a gentleman, a lady, and a child, from both of which he took one silver, and one metal watch, and upwards of seven pounds in gold and silver. He then turned out of the road, and took towards Windsor, in his way to which he met a single gentleman in a post-chaise, which he ordered to stop, but the boy drove on as fast as he could possibly go, and the gentleman pulled out a brace of pistols, one of which he presented at the window; however, Boulter rode after them, and fired at the boy, upon which he immediately stopped, the gentleman then shot at Boulter, but missed, whereupon he rode close up to the carriage, clapped his pistol to the gentleman's head, saying, if he did not give up his pistols, he would positively shoot him. The gentleman, sensible of the disadvantage he laboured under, gave up the pistols; which were followed by a pocket-book with bank notes to about forty pounds value, a purse with three

guineas and some silver, a pinchbeck watch, and a ring; he then admonished him, if he should be attacked again never to make use of a pistol, for if he should miss his aim, as he had that day, there was not one in ten but would shoot him through revenge; that it was not his desire to use any gentleman ill, and therefore should take no advantage of his situation; thanked him for what he had received, and wished him safe to his journey's end.

He continued the road through Windsor to Maidenhead, and on his way committed a number of robberies, the most extraordinary of which was stopping three post-chaises within sight of each other, from which he took in bank notes, money, and other articles, upwards of 50*l.* value. He took a ring from a lady's finger, in the hindermost chaise, which appeared to be very valuable, and at parting with it she burst into a violent flood of tears, which affected Boulter so much, that he returned it, saying, he perceived it was of more value to her, than it ever would be of to him; said, necessity had forced him to the steps he had taken, and hoped they would not endeavour to injure him. However, when the chaises reached Windsor, a hue and cry was sent out after him, which reached Maidenhead

at

at the time he was baiting; and while they were describing him, and making enquiry whether such a person had been seen there, he mounted his horse, and took the Oxford road about four miles, as fast as he could gallop; crossed the Forest to Oakingham, and from thence to Hartley-Row, where calling for a bottle of wine, he drank one glass himself, and gave the remainder, poured over a large toast, to his horse, and in less than ten minutes from his first stopping, was mounted, and out of sight. He repeated the same at Whitchurch and Everly, which were the only stoppages he made till he got to Poltshor, to which place he rode in less than seven hours, and never once baited, or gave his horse corn, nor any thing besides the three bottles of wine and a toast the whole journey from Maidenhead.

The success of this journey was very great; he accumulated a large sum of money, several valuable watches, and other things, to a considerable amount, he therefore thought it prudent to lay bye for some time, till the noise of his late expedition had blown over. He remained very close at home, and scarcely ventured a mile abroad, for fear of a discovery, in the meanwhile he procured an entire new suit of

cloaths, and contrived to make every alteration in his person and figure that could possibly be devised. After spending about two months with his friends, he took a ride to see Bath and Bristol, where he got into company with some sharpers, who eased him of a good deal of cash. To make up for this loss, he robbed upon the highway for a long time round Bath and Bristol, the whole month of September, and part of October. He stopped the Bath Machine in Chervell-lane, and robbed the inside passengers of about seven pounds, and took four shillings from an outside passenger. He robbed two of the Bristol stages within a mile of Bristol; stopped a gentleman and a lady in a post-chaise near Bath-Easton, and robbed them of near fifty pounds. Overtook a gentleman, and accompanied him three miles on the Bradford road, who said he was a clothier, and robbed him of twenty guineas, his watch, and some silver. Stopped the Bath diligence about two miles out of Bath, and robbed the passengers of nine guineas and some silver. Met a post-chaise on Devizes-plain, with two gentlemen, whom he robbed of one silver and one pinchbeck watch, four guineas, and some silver; and in about ten minutes after stopped another chaise near the same place, in which was one French gentleman, who appeared very

very much frightened, and desired Boulter would take his pistol out of the chaise, and he would immediately give him all the money he had; Boulter complied with his request, and the Frenchman pulled out his gold watch, and a purse containing seven guineas, and about fourteen shillings in silver. The Frenchman declaring it was all the money he had, and appearing very uneasy lest he should not get to his journey's end, Boulter put six-pence into the purse, and returned it him, saying, if he were to follow his profession, he might soon fill it again. He came up with a butcher on horseback within three miles of Bath, who he ordered to stop; the butcher replied, he would not stop for him nor any man living; Boulter then pulled out his pistol, rode close up to the butcher, and presented it to his head, ordering him to deliver his money; but he refused to comply, saying, he did not get it so easy as to part with it in that foolish manner; besides, if he were to be robbed, he must go upon the highway himself before he durst go home, and that he would rather not do; upon which he wished the butcher a good night, and told him to remember that Boulter was his friend. He stopped a chariot between Bath and Bristol, in which were two clergymen. When he demanded their money, they told him they

had none, nor any thing else about them worth his taking. But not satisfied with this answer, he clapped his pistol close to the ear of one of the gentlemen, saying, he must certainly discharge it, unless they immediately turned their pockets, to convince him that they travelled without money. They then begged he would withdraw his pistol, and they would give him what little money they had, which proved to be twenty-seven guineas, and about nine shillings in silver. While he was putting the money into his pocket, the coachman drove on very furiously towards Bath, before he had taken leave of his benefactors; he therefore rode very hastily after the carriage, and observing nobody in the road, called to the driver to stop, or he would shoot him. He then informed the gentlemen, that he could not think of parting with them, till they had given up their watches, which in his hurry he had before forgot to mention. The gentlemen, seeing a refusal would be in vain, immediately complied with his demand, and gave him one gold and one metal watch. Just as he was receiving the gold watch, with his head partly in at the chariot window, two gentlemen came up full speed, who pulled in their horses, and stared very hard as they rode by, which was only a foot-pace, till they were got about ten yards past, when they renewed

renewed their speed. This unexpected circumstance had such an effect upon Boulter, that had the gentlemen or the coachman called for their assistance, he acknowledges he should have made no resistance, unless it had been by riding away, and this he would have stood a very bad chance of doing, as at that time he was very indifferently mounted. However, resuming his courage, he put the gold watch in his pocket, and after robbing the coachman of a guinea and his silver watch, wished them a good night, desiring they would think of him in their prayers.

After committing a number of other robberies round that neighbourhood, and being too well known to remain much longer in safety, he thought it most adviseable to shift his quarters; he therefore took a circuit round the West of England, committing the most audacious robberies all the way. In this journey he took to another species of theft, which he acknowledges he has often in his own mind considered as a much more unpardonable offence than the other, that of stealing plate from the table at inns where he has called for accommodations. As he generally made it a rule to wear very good cloaths, and was most times mounted on a good horse, he was always shewn into good rooms, and treated

ed in a genteel manner. This afforded him frequent opportunities of pocketing silver tea-spoons, table-spoons, butter-boats, Pepper-casters, &c. of which sort of articles he got together a great number; and in order to effect this business with the greater ease and security, he would never sit down to breakfast or dinner till he had first fed his horse, and got him saddled and bridled, and ready to mount. Just before he finished his meal, he sends the waiter to order his horse, and get the bill; in the mean time having pocketed what he thought fit for his purpose, he comes forward to the door of the parlour, and there stands till his horse is brought out, then pays his bill, and instantly mounts, by which means engaging the attention of the master, and the waiter standing by, in hopes of being *remembered*, he had sufficient time to escape perhaps a mile or two from the place before any discovery could be made of the theft. He therefore recommends it to landlords and waiters, always to examine their tables before any guest leaves the house, as the only sure method of preventing sharpers from robbing them in that scandalous way.

Having made a tour round the West, and finding the country so much alarmed, that he was continually

continually pursued, and every hour in danger of being taken, he thought it most adviseable to retire till the noise of his late robberies was a little abated. Having a relation in the Forest, who lived in a very obscure situation, he resolved to go there, and make known his circumstances, and deposit in his hands all the property he had got together, and which, from its quantity, became troublesome. Here he spent his time in great retirement, seldom going out of the house for a week together; till towards a months end, when getting weary of such close confinement, and having his horse with him, he frequently rode out several miles for exercise and amusement. But even in these excursions, he could not forbear frequently stopping people on the road, and robbing them in the middle of the day, upon which account his relation became very uneasy, lest he should be pursued and traced to his house, and therefore requested him never to take his horse, with which Boulter complied. However, this was not found sufficient to withhold him from the same pursuit; for, if he walked out, and met any person in his way, who he thought had any money, he was sure to rob them; and he always made it a rule to keep a brace of pistols with him night and day.

In about two months he got perfectly weary of this retired way of life, and was determined to take the first opportunity of leaving it, yet so as to avoid that danger of a detection with which he was repeatedly threatened. Considering that the northern part of England was a country which he had never seen, and consequently where he was entirely unknown, he formed a resolution, his horse being fresh and in fine order, to take a journey to the city of York. He accordingly set out, towards the end of January 1777, for that place. When he reached London, he cloathed himself very genteely, and provided all other necessaries with which he stood in need, and then continued his journey. In his way he robbed a gentleman and a lady in the York diligence, of five guineas, and a metal watch; he stopped a clergyman on horseback near Newark, and took his watch and money. He met the York fly about two miles out of Doncaster, and robbed the passengers of upwards of thirty pounds; also a post-chaise with two ladies, about half a mile from the same place, from whom he took a very handsome ring, a gold watch, and three guineas; and between Doncaster and York he robbed several persons on horseback of trifling sums. He stayed at York three days, moving his quarters each day; in the mean time
gained

gained what information he could concerning the neighbouring towns; their market-days, and the different roads to them. The first excursion he made from York, was to Leeds, on the road to which place he robbed a gentleman in a single horse chaise of about twenty-seven shillings, and a morocco letter-case with two bank-notes, to the value of thirty-five pounds; he also stopped three persons on horseback, and several on foot, whom he robbed of their watches and money. He put up at Leeds intending to stay all night; but an account coming into the town about ten o'clock at night, of a highwayman having gone through there, he stole away into the stable, mounted his horse, and rode to Manchester with all the speed he could make. In this large manufacturing place he continued near three weeks, and lived quite in stile, till he had spent near all his money, when he quitted the place, and went upon the road again. He committed several petty robberies in his way to Sheffield, but does not remember any one of consequence. Upon the road to Rippon, he unfortunately attacked a gentleman finely mounted, whose servant having on some occasion stayed at a distance behind, he was not at first discovered. The gentleman made no reply when attacked, but looking round and seeing no servant with him,

him, drew out his purse, and gave it up without any resistance or hesitation. Just as they had parted, the servant appeared in sight, galloping after his master, and passed Boulter in less than five minutes after the robbery. Not dreaming of any pursuit, he was in no hurry to ride away, but was going on very slow, when all of a sudden he looked back, and saw the gentleman he had robbed, with his servant, riding full speed after him. On sight of this, he clapt spurs to his horse, and rode as fast as he possibly could, but in less than two miles he was overtaken, and ordered to surrender, or they would shoot him. Perceiving the gentleman on one side, and his servant on the other, and each a pistol in his hand, no hopes of escaping were left, he therefore told the gentleman he would commit himself to his mercy, not doubting but as he had been a most unfortunate young man, he would forgive him this offence, on having his money returned. The gentleman then asked his name where he lived, &c. &c. he told him his name was Poore; that he had lately began business in London in the grocery way, in which meeting with some heavy losses that had brought him to the brink of ruin, he had gone upon the road to relieve himself. This, however, had no weight, for they immediately carried him before a Justice,

tice, took away his pistols, and committed him to York-Castle, in order to take his trial at the assizes, which were just at hand.

While he lay in prison, he concerted a vast number of schemes to make his escape; but could by no means effect his purpose. He endeavoured to prevail with several persons, under a promise of great rewards to procure him instruments to cut off his irons, &c. but the time being so short before his trial, he could not succeed in his attempt. At the March assizes in the year 1777, he was brought to trial, and convicted of the offence on the clearest evidence, whereupon he was condemned, and ordered to be executed in fifteen days after. His situation at this time he acknowledges was most deplorable; having no friends in that part of the country, nor any one to intercede for him; and as for effecting an escape, the least possibility did not appear, so that the horrors of an ignominious and cruel death were never more severely felt or deplored. However, on the morning appointed for his execution, he received the unexpected but most joyful news of his Majesty's free pardon being granted him, in consideration of reforming his life, and entering into his Majesty's service, which he most chearfully promised to do, and

and at the time, says he never made a stronger resolution of any thing in the world, than he then did to lead an honest life for the future, and to spend the rest of his days in his Majesty's service.

Full of these sentiments, he entered as a private into a marching regiment then at York, and for the first four days promised fair to make a good soldier; but no sooner was he called upon to keep good hours, to appear regularly on the parade, and keep his body in certain shape and form, than he found it very unpleasant; and what would by no means agree with his constitution. On the sixth day he was ordered to prepare himself for the field at seven the next morning, to leave off his plain cloaths, and appear in the uniform then given him, with his arms, &c. This fit more uncomfortably upon him than the former, insomuch that, forgetting his late deplorable situation, and the protestations he had made in consequence of his Majesty's clemency, he got out of bed from his comrades at midnight, and having previously secured his cloaths, stole from out of his quarters, and set off towards Nottingham. In less than an hour he was overtaken by the Nottingham stage, and prevailing with the coachman to take him
up,

up, he soon arrived in that place. From Nottingham he travelled across the country to Bristol, where he arrived in about a week after his desertion, and being without a horse, and reduced to very low circumstances, he accidentally went into the ship alehouse in Milk-street, Bristol, to take some refreshment. This alehouse happened at that time to be kept by Caldwell, who treating Boulter in a very friendly and civil manner, though at that time an utter stranger to him, laid the first foundation of their intimacy. In about a week, from frequent conversation, and being constantly together, they naturally contracted a regard for each other, which appearing evident to themselves, Boulter made no scruple of relating the adventures of his life to Caldwell; and after enlarging upon the pleasure and profits of gentlemen of the road, Caldwell very readily formed the same opinion, and agreed to accompany him upon an expedition of that kind, whenever he thought proper. Having no horses, it was agreed to search round the neighbourhood, and to steal two of the very best they could find. But before they went upon this business, Boulter desired his friend only to take a walk with him a mile or two out of town, and he would soon make him acquainted with

his business. They took the Gloucester road about six o'clock in the evening, and meeting a post-chaise about a mile out of Bristol, they stopped it, and robbed a gentleman of his watch and eleven guineas. They afterwards robbed three persons on horseback, and several on foot, and then returned to Caldwell's house in Milk-street, and spent the evening very joyously, drinking to their future good success.

In three days after this adventure, a fine brown gelding about fifteen hands high was stolen from out of a piece of ground, and brought in the dead of night to Milk-street. Search was then made for several days successively to provide another, but none was to be found good enough for the purpose. Boulter having an inclination to go home to see his friends, made the same known to Caldwell, telling him he should only stay about ten days, and would then return, desiring he would in the mean while use his utmost endeavours to provide another horse. Before he reached Devizes, he robbed the passengers in the Bath diligence of a silver watch, and about seven pounds in cash. He stopped a post-chaise with two gentlemen going to Bath, from whom he took a metal watch, and upwards of twenty pounds in gold and silver. He stopped a gentleman's

tleman's servant, and robbed him of about fifteen shillings, and then crossed out of the turnpike road to Poltshot, where he was joyfully received by his relations. After spending a few days with his friends, he took a ride to Salisbury, and from thence to Winchester, Southampton, and back through Romsey. In his way he stopped the Exeter diligence near Winterslow Hur, and robbed the passengers of five guineas in gold, sixteen shillings in silver, and a metal watch with some valuable seals. He came up with a gentleman on the Andover road, whom he robbed of near ten pounds: the gentleman complained that he had not a farthing to carry him home, upon which Boulter asked how far he had to go, and on being told to Salisbury, he returned him two-pence, saying, that was quite sufficient for so short a journey. The gentleman then asked him who he was, where he lived, and whether he followed any other profession, when Boulter desired he would ask no more questions, but proceed on his road home without turning back to look after him, or he should be forced to treat him with the contents of his pistol. About two miles from Stockbridge he stopped a farmer on horseback, and robbed him of a few shillings, and then went into the town, and put up and baited at the Swan, where he

staid upwards of an hour. He then took the Sutton road, and about a mile beyond Leckford Hut stopped a gentleman on horseback, and robbed him of about five pounds. Within half a mile of Sutton he robbed another person on horseback of a guinea and seven shillings, then went to the coach and horses, fed his horse, and went over the Downs into the London road from Winchester to Basingstoke. He stopped three gentlemen in going over the Downs, but robbed only one of them. Just as he crossed into the turnpike road, he came up with a gentleman in a one horse chaise, whom he took to be Mr. Guy of Reading, and knowing that he often carries considerable sums about him, expected to have met with a good booty, and therefore insisted much on his having more money about him. He crossed the turnpike road, towards Alresford, in his way to which place he robbed two farmers, and a person on foot. From Alresford he took the road to Winchester, upon which he robbed a gentleman within half a mile of the turnpike of near twenty pounds. On the road from Winchester to Southampton, he stopped the London machine, but finding no passengers, he bid the coachman drive on. He afterwards stopped the Southampton diligence, and robbed one passenger; also two persons on
foot

foot and one on horseback near the Bridge at Chandler's Ford. Took the road for Romsey, and robbed two persons in his way, of near thirty pounds. Slept at the Dolphin that night, and early next morning set off for Bristol, committing only three robberies in his way thither, viz. a post chaise near White parish, in which was two gentlemen; the Bath machine near Stapleford, Wilts, and a gentleman on horseback about a mile out of Warminster.

On his arrival at Bristol, he was joyfully received by his friend Caldwell, who had picked up one of the finest mares in the country, and had kept her in high feed ever since he had stolen her, in order to be ready for business whenever they should think it convenient to set out, which Boulter agreed should be in two or three days, or so soon as the horse he had rode was properly refreshed.

After frequent debate on the route they should take, they at last agreed to go into Gloucestershire, Leicestershire, and all round that part of the country, where Boulter, and in fact both of them were utter strangers. They mounted their horses one day after dinner, having drank pretty freely, and took the straight road to Gloucester.

When they had got about three miles out of town, they stopped a Bristol chaise with two ladies, whom they robbed of about five pounds and a metal watch. They also stopped several other persons before they reached Cirencester, whom they robbed of several trifling sums. They baited at Cirencester, and gave their horses plenty of wine and toast, and after drinking pretty freely themselves for about an hour, they again mounted their horses, though late in the evening, determined to reach Gloucester that night, and to rob all they met in their way. About a mile and a half out of Cirencester, they met a gentleman on horseback, whom they attacked and robbed, and wishing him a good night, told him he had had the honour of meeting Boulter. They met a farmer and his wife in a single horse chaise, whom they robbed of near forty pounds; and a gentleman riding by at the same time, Caldwell was dispatched to overtake and rob him, which he did of a silver watch, two guineas, and some silver. They afterwards attacked a post-chaise, which drove by very furiously, but as it was dark, they could not perceive who was in it. Boulter rode up to it first, and was some time before he could oblige the driver to stop, when riding up to the door, a gentleman let down the glass, and instantly discharged a pistol in Boulter's

ter's face. The ball took the Skin off his forehead, and went through the crown of his hat, which it carried from his head. The force of the powder fell upon his right eye, and took away his sight for nine days, and left such a mark of the powder on that side of his face, and round the eye, that he could never afterwards efface, and by which mark he has often been described, and advertised in the papers. When this happened, Caldwell was about two hundred yards behind, but on hearing a pistol fired, rode up as fast as possible, and found his friend Boulter covered with blood, stunned, and deprived of sight. However, after wiping away the blood, and Boulter getting a little the better of his surprise and consternation, and having tied a silk handkerchief round his forehead, they were so exasperated at the adventure, that they agreed to ride after the chaise, and to shoot the person who attacked him. In about half an hour they overtook the chaise, and coming up one on one side and one on the other side of the chaise, Caldwell discharged his pistol through the glats windows, and at the same time ordered the driver to stop. Boulter on the other side called out to his companion not to fire, but to let him deal with the person who had attempted to take away his life, and putting his pistol to his head, said he was

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determined

determined he should not go a step farther till he had delivered every farthing of his money, his watch and pocket-book; but as for his life, tho' he did not deserve it, that he would readily spare. They suffered the chaise to go on, after they had taken a gold watch, nine guineas, and a bill of twenty-pounds, from the gentleman who was in it. It was then debated whether they should proceed on their journey, or return to Bristol, and the latter being thought most adviseable, till Boulter should recover his sight, they set out for Caldwell's house, where they arrived by break of day the next morning. Meeting several people on the road, Caldwell was desirous of robbing them, but Boulter insisted to the contrary, saying it was risking life without necessity; for as it was too dark to perceive whether his antagonist had any weapon, they were liable to be shot before they could speak a word, and for that reason he was determined never to rob again but by day light, which resolution he kept ever afterwards.

So soon as Boulter had recovered his sight which was in about ten days, they again set off for Leicestershire, and on the road committed as usual, several robberies. In less than ten minutes after their arrival at Leicester, going to the stable to feed their horses, Boulter was
accosted

accosted by the Serjeant of the company into which he entered at the city of York, when he received his Majesty's pardon. He does not choose to mention the Serjeant's name, nor the regiment, lest he should bring him into trouble for his good nature; for the serjeant agreed to take no notice of him, provided he would make it worth his while to hold his tongue. They went into a room together, where they offered the Serjeant ten guineas; but he refused it, saying it was not sufficient, for he could at least have that reward for taking him; and therefore, unless he was complimented very handsomely, he would ring the bell for a whole company of soldiers. They then emptied their pockets, and all the money Boulter and Caldwell could muster, did not amount to more than thirty-one pounds and a few odd shillings, having met with very indifferent success in their way thither. The Serjeant being convinced this was all they were then worth, agreed to take the thirty-pounds, leaving the remainder to pay their reckoning, &c. This unexpected meeting, however, was by no means agreeable; and dreading that something or other might transpire from the Serjeant that they were highwaymen, they ordered their horses immediately, and detained the Serjeant till they were mounted, thinking themselves very happy when

when they had lost sight of the place. They rode to Litchfield, before they committed any robbery, for fear the Serjeant should impeach them, and cause them to be pursued. From Litchfield they took the road to Stafford, upon which they robbed a coach and four with one gentleman and a lady, from whom they took a Lady's gold watch and equipage, a gold enamelled ring, and thirteen guineas in gold, and some silver. The lady appeared very much frightened, which Boulter perceiving, he withdrew his pistol, and begged her not to be afraid; for that he never wished to do any injury, and for that reason seldom or ever robbed any persons but such as could well afford to spare him some of their riches; said his name was Boulter, and wished her safe home. They continued robbing all the way till they came to Chester, and having accumulated a very considerable sum, they resolved to regale themselves at that place, and lay by for a time, till the noise of their late robberies was somewhat abated. They were recommended to the sign of the Bull, which was kept they say, by one Mr. Vaughan, and they accordingly put up there; and after staying three or four days, finding the landlord very civil and attentive to them, and, as they termed it, *a very hearty fellow*, they contracted a friendship with him, and discovered

covered who they were, and their business; and during the time they staid in that country, they were always perfectly safe in his house, and treated with the utmost civility, and friendliness. From this place they made frequent excursions round the neighbourhood, committed numerous robberies, and got together a great deal of money, and spent as freely, feeding their horses, to express it in their own terms, upon good bread and wine, and themselves upon the best that money could procure. The last time they were at Chester, they left in Mr. Vaughan's hands on brace of pistols, a pair of silver salts, two silver pepper-casters, four silver spoons, two shirts, and a new suit of cloaths, which was made during their abode there. These things, they both solemnly declared, on the morning of their execution, were now in Mr. Vaughan's hands.

From Chester they took another route home, through Shrewsbury, Birmingham, Worcester, &c. committing robberies, as usual, more or less, all the way. Caldwell's horse giving out, they made search after another, and in a day or two observed a handsome black mare in a paddock in the lower part of Worcestershire, which they made no hesitation to take away, or rather exchange for the other, which they turned loose

so soon as they had put the bridle and saddle on the mare. When they reached Bristol, having got together a number of watches, and plate of different kinds, and not wanting immediately to convert them into money, they dug a hole in Caldwell's cellar, about two feet under the floor and buried them, lest in their absence any accidental discovery should betray them. When this was done, Boulter having a desire to go once more among his relations, and to see his mother, set out from Bristol for that purpose, leaving Caldwell at home, to settle his own affairs, and to get things ready for a journey into the West, which they had agreed to take so soon as Boulter returned. On the present excursion, he did not at first propose to commit any robbery, but to make it a journey of pleasure; however, meeting a post chaise about two miles out of Melksham in which were two ladies going towards Bath, he could not forbear drawing forth his pistol; and easing them of a gold watch, and upwards of seven pounds in cash. From Poltshot he resolved to take a tour round part of Hampshire on a party of pleasure, by way of calling on some of his old acquaintances. He set out pretty early in the morning, and coming over the plain from Devizes, between seven and eight o'clock, met a gentleman on the Plain, who stared very hard

hard at him, and after they had passed, they both looked back at one another, and when the person had got at about a hundred yards distance, he turned short round, and rode after Boulter as fast as he could gallop. Boulter at this instant of time could account for the circumstance no other way, than by supposing that the gentleman was of the road, and was assuredly going to rob him; and was considering in his mind how he should act if attacked, when the gentleman called out to him, and accosted him with saying, that he rode a very fine horse, and asked whether he would sell him. Boulter replied, if he could get money enough he should have no objection. The gentleman asked what was his price; he replied, not less than fifty guineas. Can she trot and gallop well? Yes, said Boulter, she can trot sixteen miles an hour, and gallop twenty, or she would not do for my business. The gentleman, a little startled at the answer, desired he might see her go. Yes, replies Boulter, with all my heart; but I must be rewarded for it; and while the gentleman was considering amidst his surprize what to offer him, Boulter clapped his pistol to his breast; saying, no less would satisfy him than all he had got, which being complied with, he said, Now, sir, you have seen my performance, you shall see the performance of my horse, which
I don't

I don't doubt will please you, and wishing him a good morning, clapped spurs to his horse, and was out of sight in a few minutes. This was the only adventure that befel him upon this journey, which engaged him about four days, and then he returned to Bristol.

In about a week after this, their horses having been properly refreshed, and every other necessary provided, they set off on an expedition into the West. They had not rode far, before they attacked an officer in a post-chaise, from whom they took a gold repeating watch, and three guineas. They robbed the passengers in the Taunton Coach of a considerable sum, and stopped the Exeter Diligence within two miles of Honiton, and robbed the passengers of near thirteen pounds. When they reached Exeter they went to the Half-moon, an inn where Boulter was well known by the landlord, and where he had before spent a good deal of money. From Exeter they made excursions every way round the country, and committed numberless daring and audacious robberies, contriving as much as possible to spend their leisure time, and to refresh their horses at the above house. One day while they were at dinner there, Boulter had like to have lost his famous mare, which was supposed to be not worth less than a hundred guineas.

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As the ostler was bringing her out of the stable to give her some water, one Mr. Harding of Bristol being in the yard, and taking notice of her, called out to the landlord, saying, D--mn me Hemmings, this is the very mare my father-in-law Mr. James lost a few months ago; how came she here? To which the landlord replied, Pshaw! why d--mn me I have had that mare myself these twelvemonths, and how should she be your father-in-law's. By G--d, replied Mr. Harding, if I had seen her in any other hands, or had met her on the road, I should have sworn to her. Mr. Hemmings having got Mr. Harding into a parlour to dinner, took the first opportunity of acquainting Boulter and Caldwell of the circumstance, desiring them to be off before the mare should be examined or looked at again, upon which Boulter got up, mounted the mare, and set off towards Plymouth, and in about half an hour was followed by Caldwell, the landlord advising them not to go off together, lest Mr. Harding should see Caldwell and know him, and thereby give suspicion of the mare. This circumstance Boulter and Caldwell both declared in the most solemn manner was a fact, of which we shall hereafter give some confirmation. In their way to Plymouth they committed several robberies; and in two or three days returned to

Exeter

Exeter again, Caldwell's mare which he had stolen in Worcestershire being tired and rode down, was put into Mr. Hemmings's care to be sent to grass, and got up again; and a gelding which Boulter had formerly left there for the same purpose, being in fine order, was taken instead of her; so that being again well mounted, they made daily excursions into the country all round Exeter, committing the most daring robberies, until the country became so much alarmed that they thought it dangerous to remain there any longer, and therefore retired to Caldwell's house at Bristol, where they remained a long time in secret; but frequently committed robberies in that neighbourhood, to the great terror of the inhabitants, who durst scarcely venture abroad towards the evening.

In the beginning of October following, Boulter was determined on another expedition into Wilts and Hampshire; and taking Caldwell's horse, set off towards Devizes. In his way he robbed the Bath Diligence, and three or four persons on horseback, not any of whom made resistance. On the plain between Devizes and Salisbury, he stopped a post-chaise, and robbed
three

three ladies who were in it of about seven pounds, besides a crown piece, and some dollars; he also stopped two gentlemen on horseback within a mile of the same place, and robbed them of upwards of five pounds. From Salisbury he went to Fordingbridge, Ringwood and Lymington, upon which roads he attacked and robbed several persons; and from Lymington he took the road to Southampton, and in his way robbed a farmer and his wife on horseback near Lindhurst of two guineas and a few shillings; also a gentleman and lady in a whisky of six guineas, a metal watch, and some silver. From hence he took the turnpike road leading from Southampton to Romsey, upon which he stopped Mr. Young, whom he knew perfectly well, and robbed him of thirty-one pounds ten shillings, and his watch. He also robbed the passengers in the Bath Diligence, who happened to be Mrs. Dawson of Bath, and Mr. Noyes of Southampton, and of this robbery he was convicted by the clearest evidence, (See his Trial.) He stopped a post-chaise about half a mile from the Horns Inn, and took two guineas and some silver from a gentleman going towards Romsey; he also stopped several other persons both on foot and horseback, and robbed them of several small sums. He afterwards robbed on the Western and De-

vizes road, till having got together a very large sum of money, he returned to his accomplice at Bristol, where he remained the greatest part of the winter.

In the month of January, 1778, Boulter and Caldwell made frequent excursions together from Bristol, committing robberies in the neighbourhood of Gloucester, Worcester, Bath, Chippenham, Warminster, Wells, &c. and also places within a day's ride from Bristol, where they generally rendezvoused every two or three days; till the beginning of February, when Boulter took a journey his old road into Wilts, and Hants, committing robberies all the way. He stopped the Exeter machine between Salisbury and the Hut, and robbed the passengers of near fifteen pounds. He robbed two gentlemen on horseback near the direction posts at the meeting of the two great Western roads, about half a mile from the Hut. Within two miles of Stockbridge he robbed a gentleman on horseback of two guineas and some silver. In Popham-Lane he robbed three persons on horseback, separately, of small sums, but does not recollect how much. Slept at an Inn upon the road within three or four miles of Winchester, and the next afternoon committed several robberies on the turnpike between Winchester

chester and Southampton, and on the road leading to Redbridge and Romsey. He stopped a Clergyman on the last-mentioned road, whom he robbed of his gold watch, and about fifteen shillings in cash. He robbed another gentleman near the Summer-house on the Common of three guineas and a six-pence; but returned the six-pence to pay turnpikes. He stopped two different persons on foot, and robbed them of a few shillings. He stopped a fish carrier near the Common Gate, and took from him a guinea, half a guinea, and some silver. Overtook an old gentleman at the entrance of the wood near Chandler's-Ford-bridge. Just as he was got within twenty yards of him, perceiving him break out of the road into the wood, he called out to him to stop, when the old gentleman looking back, asked what he wanted? Boulter replied, your money; No, says the other, you are joking surely; not I indeed, says Boulter, and immediately presenting his pistol, insisted on his money, or he would blow his brains out. The gentleman said, "Fire away, for you shall not have my money," and made a push at the pistol; Boulter then said, I must kill you then, must I? To which he replied, "Do what you will, you shall not have my money;" so that Boulter perceiving him very

resolute, and determined not to be robbed, unless he had blended murder and robbery together, suffered him to ride away without any further altercation. In a few minutes after he came up with a farmer on the turnpike leading to Romsey, and robbed him of eight guineas, a silver watch, and a few shillings in silver. The man begging very hard for his watch, and it appearing to be of little value, Boulter returned it. Turned back and crossed the road thro' Swathling, between which place and Southampton, robbed a person on foot of half a guinea and fourteen shillings. Then took the road for Romsey, upon which he stopped a single gentleman, and robbed him of a silver watch, and two guineas. By this time it began to grow dark, and having stopped a great many persons, thought it adviseable to return to Bristol, and make a tour into a different part of the kingdom.

Towards the middle of April, Boulter and Caldwell agreed to pay a visit to the city of Oxford, and to spend a few days in that neighbourhood. In their way to that city, they robbed the Bristol Fly, and the Bath Diligence; stopped a post-chaise, and robbed several Gentlemen on horseback. They staid at Oxford three days, and then set off for Reading, on the road to which

which place they stopped a traveller in a single horse chaise, and robbed him of one guinea and three shillings, which he persisted was all he had; but as they were very certain he had money hid about him, Caldwell was with great difficulty withheld from shooting him, which certainly would have been done, had not Boulter held his arm, and kept him till the chaise was out of sight. In their way from Reading to Basingstoke, they met only one person on horseback, from whom they took half a guinea and seven shillings and six-pence. While at Basingstoke, they learnt the King and Queen were going to Portsmouth, and as their presence would naturally draw a vast number of people, they supposed it would afford them an excellent opportunity of furnishing themselves with a large sum of money. They set off in their way thither through Odiham; within a mile of which place they robbed a farmer of his watch, a guinea, and a half-crown piece. From Odiham they went to Alton, and in their way robbed two young men on foot of about twenty-three shillings. From thence they took the turnpike-road to Gosport, and committed three robberies before they reached Wickham. They stopped a post-chaise near Westmeon, in which was a lady and a gentleman; from the lady they took

Sunday 10 May

a gold watch with gold equipage and seals, and and from the gentleman they took a watch with a gold chain, together with a purse containing five guineas and some silver. About a mile from the same place they stopped a single gentleman, and robbed him of one guinea and one half-guinea. About a mile from Droxford they stopped another chaise with one gentleman, from whom they took a pinchbeck watch, two guineas and some silver. They rode through Wickham and Fareham, and took the road to Portsmouth. Near Portchester they robbed two gentlemen on horseback of about five pounds in gold and silver, then went to Portsmouth, where they stayed four days. They took the road from thence to Petersfield, and before they reached that place committed several robberies. They stopped a chaise near Horn-Dean, in which were two ladies, whom they robbed of three guineas and a half-guinea. They stopped a man in a cart, from whom they took a silver watch, and seven shillings and six-pence in cash; their first indictment was for this robbery, of which they were convicted. (*See their Trial.*) They also stopped a gentleman near Petersfield, and robbed him of a guinea and ten half-crown pieces. From Petersfield they thought it best to decamp into another part of the country.

They

They therefore took the straight road through Winchester to Salisbury, and from Salisbury to Blandford, and thence across the country to Bristol. Below Salisbury they committed several robberies. They stopped the two Exeter Diligences near Blandford, and robbed the passengers of some small sums of money, in the whole about ten pounds. They stopped a ~~post-chaise~~ ^{pt^h may} with two gentlemen and a lady, from whom they took a watch and about three pounds. ^{all three on horse back} They told one of the gentlemen, who said he had no money, that if they ever met with him again without a proper quantity of cash, they would blow his brains out; and Caldwell said he deserved it for not having any with him now; when the lady interposed, and said it was at present very excuseable, for as they had been to Portsmouth to see his Majesty, they could not wonder that he had no money left. *

After they had been at Bristol three days, they resolved on a journey into Worcestershire, Staffordshire, and Warwickshire, and to take some of their watches, rings, &c. to Birmingham to dispose of, supposing that a very likely place to turn them into money without raising suspicion. They accordingly packed up such things as they thought most likely for sale, and took the straight road to Birmingham. On the road, Caldwell's

horse

D 4

X on Bactury Down
near Wimborne

horse knocked up, and they were very much perplexed with this misfortune, when accidentally meeting with one Smith, an old acquaintance and brother of the road, who was very well mounted, they agreed to change horses, giving him a small present in testimony of their friendship and good will. When they reached Birmingham, they put up at the Waggon and Horses, and after they had refreshed themselves, Boulter, as they had before agreed, went out to dispose of the watches. When he reached the market-place, he observed a Jew, whom he took to be a proper person for his purpose, and accosting him, pulled out a gold watch, which he said, being of no use to him, he wished to dispose of. The Jew, after looking at it, gave him a direction to his house, and said if he would call at four o'clock, he did not know but he might buy it. At the time appointed, Boulter waited on him, and while they were talking in the shop a person came in, who proved to be the keeper of Birmingham prison, and clapping him on the shoulder, said he was in custody. He was then taken before a magistrate, and examined, and signifying that he came into town with a gentleman, whom he left at his inn, some persons went to the Waggon and Horses, and apprehended Caldwell, and they were both committed to
Bride-

Bridewell. (See the Trial, in which is specified at large, upon the oath of Mr. Wool'dridge, keeper of the prison, all the articles that were found upon them.) Notice being given to Sir John Fielding, they were in a few days conveyed to Bow-street, and after undergoing a long examination, were committed, Caldwell to Tottenham-fields, and Boulter to Clerkenwell prison. Boulter agreeing to pay for a bed, was put into an upper ward, with six other prisoners; he had not been there above two days, before he observed an escape was practicable. He communicated this to his fellow prisoners, and they agreed to put it in practice; accordingly in the day-time meeting with some women in the courtyard, they agreed to give them a certain sum to procure some spring saws, and other instruments fit for their purpose. About midnight they began work in a part of the wall where a piece of bond-timber was fixed, which being cut away, they forced out the bricks, and made a hole next the street large enough to creep through, and having got off their irons, three of them made their escape; the other four being committed for petty offences, of which they were pretty sure of being acquitted, chose to stay behind.

It
Sunday 31 May

It is surprising that Boulter, so soon as he found himself at liberty, should not hurry away from the neighbourhood of the prison. On the contrary, he went to a house only two doors from his place of confinement, where he staid two days, and was measured for and had the suit of cloaths made, that he was executed in. On the third day, he took the Diligence and went to Leicester, being a part of the country where he was least known, and in a few days he stole a horse, with which he made the best of his way to Dover, in order to get out of the Kingdom. When he came to Dover, he found, to his great mortification, that an embargo was put upon all vessels, and so strict that he could not even prevail with any person to venture out with him in a small sailing boat, with which he intended, could he have got her out to sea, to have crossed over to Calais. Finding he could not succeed, he set off for Portsmouth, where, on his arrival, he found the same difficulty, not being able even to get over to the Isle of Wight. From Portsmouth he went to Bristol, hoping, among the number of vessels that are continually sailing from time to time, he might be able to get a passage to some place or other out of the reach of Sir John Fielding's men, some or other of whom he was under continual

tinual apprehensions of meeting. After staying at Bristol three days, and finding no probability of any vessel sailing, so strict was the embargo there, that he resolved to go into the Isle of Portland, and stay there till an opportunity offered of getting out of the country. He set off from Bristol, with this view, and coming to Bridport, went to an Inn to feed his horse and refresh himself. When he asked what he could have for dinner, he was told there was a family ordinary just ready, which he agreed to partake of. There were three other persons dined at the same table, one of whom taking particular notice of Boulter, and observing the powder-marks round his eye, got up from table, and calling out the landlord, told him he was sure from the description, that the person who came in last was Boulter. The landlord immediately called him out of the room, and taking him into a private parlour, said, that the gentlemen who were at dinner knew him to be Boulter, and that he had lately broke out of Clerkenwell Prison; but as he had never done him any injury, he did not desire to hurt him, and therefore wished him to pay his reckoning, and go away directly. Boulter replied, that they were all very much mistaken, for that he was a London Rider: but as he did not

not wish to be a means of breeding any dispute; he had no objection to go; he therefore paid his reckoning, and was going to mount his horse, when the landlord and one of the company came out to him again, and seized him; they then carried him before a Justice, and he was conveyed to Dorchester gaol. Sir John Fielding being acquainted with this circumstance, he was conveyed once more to London, and committed to Newgate, from whence he was conducted under a strong guard to Winchester gaol.

Early on the morning of their execution, Mr. White, Keeper of Winchester gaol, his Son, and the Ordinary, attended the Convicts, informing them, that no hopes of respite or reprove could now exist, and they had only a few hours to remain in this world, they hoped every moment they had to live, would be employed in making their peace with the Almighty, and in preparing for another world; and that, if they had any thing upon their minds which they wished to communicate, or any discoveries that could be made for the public good, this was the only opportunity that they would have. Boulter and Caldwell then declared as follows: That they never committed murder. That they had left in the hands of Mr. Vaughan at the Bull at Chester,

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all the articles before mentioned. That the mare which Mr. Harding claimed at the Half-moon at Exeter, and which is of great value, was the real property of his Father-in-law, Mr. Abraham James of Brislington Common, from whom she was stolen for his use. That Mr. Hemmings, keeper of the said Inn, informed them of what passed between Mr. Harding and him, and desired them to set off as soon as possible, but separately, lest Mr. Harding should see them, and know Caldwell. That they left in Mr. Hemmings's hands the following articles, in consideration of which Boulter had only received eight guineas while they were at his house, and a five guinea Devonshire bill, which he sent to Boulter while he was in Winchester gaol. The articles are, one repeating gold watch, valued at fifty guineas, one other gold watch, four silver watches, and a black mare which they stole out of Worcester-shire. The five guinea Devonshire bill was inclosed in a letter, the superscription of which was, For Mr. Thomas Boulter at Winchester Castle, but was in the inside addressed to Mr. Poor; the contents are as follow:

Mr.

Exon July 27, 1778.

Mr. Poor,

Your I rec'd and am very sorry to hear of your misfortune which I lettel thought of you I have sent you five guineas Bill that I was inteded to you which hope will come salf to hand and let me know by the return of Post where you rec'd this Letter I have not heard nothing of you be for your letter.

(A true Copy.)

J. HEMMINGS.

The convicts further declared, that in the cellar under Caldwell's house at Bristol, they had buried a great number of watches, and other things of value; which they had from time to time stolen, and desired they might be dug for; directions have been sent down to Bristol for this purpose, but no answer was received when this pamphlet went to press; but whatever may transpire in consequence of these enquiries, shall be laid before the public.

Boulter also declared, just before his death, that he had written a letter to Mr. Hemmings, desiring he would give up the articles in his hands to his mother at Poltshot, and had signified in a letter to his mother that such and such articles would be sent her from him; but by his mother's

THOMAS BOULTER. 63

ther's answer, which is as follows, they never were received.

Polshott, August 10, 1778.

Deares Childe

My blessing I sent to you hoping that God will be you frend I hame sorry to acquaint you that the gentelmen you talked of Ar both in London, what you talked about is not come, your Seister Betty came home safe, be pleased to send how you are as sun as posabel, and how maters goes with you, be pleased to send word when your Seister most come to you, all frindes desfers thir kind love to you, your Brother's and Sisters joine me in love to you. from you unbapecy mother

ELIZ. BOULTER.

The publishers, cautious of exposing the characters of individuals, were unwilling to lay those particulars before the public, which must so essentially affect the persons concerned, till the confession of the convicts was corroborated by such further circumstances and testimony, that they could not, without great injustice to the public, have connived at the charge. Were highwaymen never harboured nor secreted by those who wear a fair face to the world, we should not so often be infested with them; for had they no opportunities of harbouring together, of being encouraged,

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and of forming connections, the way of life would be in itself so wretched, so distressed, and so very uncomfortable that no one would follow it, or if they did, could reign but a short time. The testimony of Abraham James, Esq; of Brislington Common near Bristol, relative to the mare, is material. He came to Winchester on this business the 24th of August last, and hearing the story related to him, he charged his memory, and said he remembered Mr. Harding's coming home at the time, and relating the same circumstance; he said he should take proper care to enquire into the matter, and if evidence sufficient could be procured, he would spare no expence in bringing such a man to justice. Mr. James was then directed where to find the mare, which will be given up on his making a proper demand of her. Every article which the prisoners have recovered, will be restored to the owners so far as they can be found; and persons having any of the convicts effects in their hands, by appropriating them to their own use, are liable to a prosecution, even the friends of the deceased. A particular description of the watches, and mare in Mr. Hemmings's hands, may be had of the Printer, or Mr. J. White, Keeper of Winchester Gaol.